



EXTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AT LEGAL SERVICES NYC

Legal Services NYC is the largest provider of free civil legal services to low-income people in the United States. For 40 years our staff of talented attorneys, paralegals, social workers and clerical workers has helped thousands of New Yorkers by providing access to the legal system by

- representing our clients in courts and administrative tribunals;
- assisting clients with community-based economic development;
- providing legal education through community workshops, *hotlines* and written materials; and
- providing community and professional training in poverty law for attorneys, advocates and others.

Our core practice areas are family, housing, benefits, consumer, and education law. In addition, several of our offices have special projects for the elderly, victims of domestic violence, victims of predatory lending practices, immigrants, and people with HIV.

Our community-based offices – made up of offices in low-income communities and transportation hubs throughout New York City – include ***Bedford-Stuyvesant Community Legal Services***, the ***Brooklyn Family Defense Project***, ***Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A***, ***Legal Services NYC-Bronx***, ***Legal Services NYC-Brooklyn Branch***, the ***Legal Services NYC Legal Support Unit***, ***Manhattan Legal Services***, ***Queens Legal Services***, ***South Brooklyn Legal Services***, and ***Staten Island Legal Services***.

Several of these offices offer opportunities for attorneys in private practice to gain valuable legal expertise and experience and make a difference in our clients' lives and communities through externships. Externship programs provide associates from law firms to our offices to work full-time for four to six month periods under supervision of one of Legal Services NYC's managing attorneys. Externships are a unique opportunity for *pro bono* lawyers to gain valuable, concentrated experience in the courtroom and with direct client contact.

Externship opportunities currently available at Legal Services NYC include:

1. LEGAL SERVICES NYC - BRONX

Supervision for each of the following opportunities will be provided by the experienced attorneys who direct each unit, with the assistance of senior staff attorneys:

- a. ***Public Benefits Unit:*** The extern in this unit will: have the opportunity for extensive client contact; conduct advocacy on clients' behalf with city and state agencies; represent clients at administrative hearings (fair hearings); and, commence Article 78 Proceedings in Supreme Court challenging final agency determinations. The extern will also have the opportunity to participate in meetings and task forces relating to various aspects of social services delivery in NYC.
- b. ***Unemployment Insurance Advocacy Program:*** The Extern will answer the Unemployment Insurance Helpline to ensure that unemployed workers get access to our services and will also provide advice and representation at unemployment insurance administrative hearings and appeals to the Unemployment Insurance Appeals Board. The attorney/s will conduct advocacy on clients' behalf with the Department of Labor, and may handle appeals to the Appellate Division, Third Department. The attorney will probably have anywhere from two to eight hearings per month.
- c. ***Education Law Practice:*** A large part of the Extern's duties will be the representation of students with disabilities in special education hearings, at the school, administrative hearing, and federal court level. The unit also gives advice, counsel and brief service on a variety of legal issues, including privacy of records, involuntary school transfers, and transportation difficulties. The Unit also provides community education training to parents and lay advocates in the Bronx.

2. THE BROOKLYN FAMILY DEFENSE PROJECT

Family: The Brooklyn Family Defense Project (BFDP) was established by Legal Services NYC in April 2007 to represent low-income parents in child protective proceedings and related matters in the Brooklyn Family Court. Funded by the City of New York, BFDP's mission is to provide high quality legal representation through an interdisciplinary approach that protects parents' due process rights while promoting access to the services necessary to build safe and stable families. An extern at BFDP will handle a caseload under the supervision of a BFDP supervising attorney.

3. BROOKLYN LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION A

Supervision for each of the following opportunities will be provided by the experienced attorneys who direct each unit, with the assistance of senior staff attorneys:

- a. ***Housing:*** The extern in this unit will work very closely with housing attorneys on senior housing eviction cases. She or he will be in court often, and there will be extensive motion practice.

- b. ***Community Economic Development (CED) Unit:*** CED Unit externs will collaborate with the other CED Unit attorneys on their clients' larger community development projects (which largely relate to affordable housing, healthcare and education). In general, externs will assist with contract review, negotiation and drafting, and with the preparation and execution of real estate and loan closings. They will also conduct statutory, regulatory and case law research and prepare memorandums. Externs will also take the lead in the Unit's representation of not-for-profit "start-ups" which generally encompasses incorporation, federal tax exemption, sales and use tax exemption, NYS Charities Bureau registration and initial corporate set-up.
- c. ***Disability Unit:*** Too often innocent recipients of retirement or disability benefits are caught in a net of overpayments which they did not cause. These people need representation in administrative proceedings seeking waiver or reconsideration of the fact or amount of the alleged overpayment.
- d. ***Predatory Lending Practice:*** The extern will be engaged in foreclosure defense work, emphasizing defense of people who are facing foreclosure of mortgages resulting from fraudulent and deceptive (i.e. predatory) means. The extern will also be representing and give special consideration to foreclosure cases where people have been victimized by fraudulent foreclosure "rescue" schemes.

4. LEGAL SERVICES NYC - BROOKLYN BRANCH

General Litigation Practice: The Brooklyn Branch Extern would be a generalist, handling a mixture of housing, employment, and benefits work. Opportunities for experience will include: appearing in Housing Court, organizing unemployment compensation hearings, and enforcing welfare rights through Fair Hearings, Article 78 proceedings and appeals. The extern will be supervised by the Project Director, Steven Bernstein.

5. MANHATTAN LEGAL SERVICES

Supervision for each of the following opportunities will be provided by the experienced attorneys who direct each unit, with the assistance of senior staff attorneys:

- a. ***Housing:*** The extern in this unit will provide representation to tenants in landlord-tenant cases, administrative hearings and appeals, and will litigate a variety of affirmative cases. There will be opportunity (i) for significant motion practice, (ii) for extensive client contact, and (iii) to handle appeals, trials and Article 78 proceedings.
- b. ***HIV/Health:*** The extern in this unit will be a generalist, providing representation and/or advice in the following areas: benefits, disability,

consumer, housing, family, estate planning, immigration, and HIV confidentiality/discrimination issues.

- c. ***Consumer/General Litigation:*** This unit handles litigation on consumer matters ranging from individual cases of clients being sued for debt collection to federal court cases on consumer issues. The extern in this unit will have an opportunity for extensive client contact, court appearances on a regular basis, as well as learning how to handle more complex affirmative cases on a variety of poverty law issues.

6. SOUTH BROOKLYN LEGAL SERVICES

SBLS has a long and successful history of working with externs. Supervision is provided by the experienced attorneys who direct each unit with the assistance of senior staff attorneys:

- a. ***Housing:*** SBLS's well-established housing externship program would be easy to expand. Externs are in Housing Court on eviction cases on most workdays. There is extensive motion practice. Externs have successfully handled full trials and appeals and have participated in federal litigation.
- b. ***Family Law/Domestic Violence:*** SBLS's Family Law Unit focuses on domestic violence. Externs will litigate a wide variety of issues in both Family Court and in Supreme Court, which handles matrimonial cases. An extern will be in one court or the other an average of three days a week.
- c. ***Disability/Consumer:*** Externs in SBLS's SSI Unit will handle SSI and Social Security Disability cases and will conduct the case from client interviews through administrative hearings and District Court appeals. In addition, the Unit has developed a consumer law practice for the Unit's clients because so many of them have had their SSI benefits frozen by creditors in the bank accounts into which the federal government deposits those benefits. Externs will participate in efforts to eliminate this practice, which often severely injures clients when they cannot get access to their only money.
- d. ***HIV Unit:*** Externs in the HIV Project will be generalists. Their work will involve the same kind of cases handled by the rest of the office (e.g., housing, family, and benefits matters), but a few will also involve HIV-specific matters (e.g., discrimination and confidentiality). Housing matters will constitute a major part of the caseload.
- e. ***Brooklyn Low-Income Tax Clinic:*** Externs in SBLS's Low-Income Tax Clinic will handle tax controversies for working poor people at all stages. Many of the controversies involve the Earned Income Tax Credit, but other issues regularly arise as well. The extern will also be involved in community education programs on tax rights and responsibilities. The extern will focus on client

interviews and negotiation with IRS representatives through the level of Tax Court.

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For more information regarding Legal Services NYC, or any of the opportunities described above, please contact Edwina Frances Martin, Director of Communications and Government Relations, at (646) 442-3586, emartin@LegalServicesNYC.org.

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*BEDFORD-STUYVESANT COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES * THE BROOKLYN FAMILY DEFENSE PROJECT * BROOKLYN LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION A * LEGAL SERVICES NYC-BRONX * LEGAL SERVICES NYC -BROOKLYN BRANCH * LEGAL SERVICES NYC-CENTRAL OFFICE * THE LEGAL SERVICES NYC LEGAL SUPPORT UNIT * MANHATTAN LEGAL SERVICES * QUEENS LEGAL SERVICES * SOUTH BROOKLYN LEGAL SERVICES * STATEN ISLAND LEGAL SERVICES*

350 Broadway, 6th Floor, New York, New York 10013 · (212) 431-7200 · WWW.LEGALSERVICESNYC.ORG

